

the hole in the heart puffed out
like a chocolate creme filled,

the eyes glazed over,
coffee dripping from his nose.

THE VALUE OF LITERATURE

I wanted to get a tattoo which meant something
only I didn't have a wife, girlfriend, lover
or even a steady fuck.

I was also against the prospect of having MOM
scribbled across my bicep.

What remained of my life was
booze and books;
booze taking a very close second to sex,
occasionally nudging ahead
during dry spells.

The prospect of having a beer can
on my arm for the rest of my life
(until laser surgery do us part)
wasn't so good.

I thought about getting a poem
but figured reading my arm
wouldn't bring much enjoyment.

Finally after deliberation with a bottle of vodka,
I decided on the cover of Gerald Locklin's
THE FIREBIRD POEMS:
a beautiful bird with green beak,
orange and red feathers
swooping with claws out.

Like most other small press readers,
I'd elevated Locklin from Jesus to God
shortly after the world discovered
the wonders of Bukowski.

I dropped off the book a day early
so the artist could draw the bird.
He asked what the book was about,
laughed when I said poetry, the tattoo
on his jugular vein jerking with every laugh.
I believe he was
of the "books-are-for-pussies" type.

He said the tattoo would cost \$100.

When I returned the next day to go under the needle,
he only charged me \$50,
half the original price,
after he, "read the fuckin' poems."

Shit, I thought, the book only cost \$12.95
not counting shipping and handling.

COUNTER GUY

Considering the fact
that no one looks at each other
when they're shopping for porno
in the adult bookstore,

it amazes me that the clerks
are so friendly.

I get to the counter
and the guy wants to know
if "that's all," counts my change
out slowly to make sure
he's giving me the correct amount,
sends me off with a smile
and a "have a nice day."

Like I'm buying milk or cigarettes.
Only more friendly.

THINGS I'VE BEEN WHEN DRUNK

A world traveler who has seen
the graves of both Jim Morrison
and Ezra Pound as well as
negotiated the deal for the first
McDonalds in Russia.

A huge underworld writer
in the vein of Bukowski.
Of course, you haven't heard of me,
I'm much bigger in Europe.

The author of the AFTER SEX
COOKBOOK FOR LOVERS. Well, actually,
I'm just one of three authors
along with Linda Lovelace and Dinah Shore.

A Greenpeace volunteer. You didn't
see me on that boat running down
those duckbill platypus poachers?